

REMARKS

Applicant has canceled pending Claims 1-14 and submits herewith a new Claim 15. Thus, the claim rejections under 35 USC 112 and 35 USC 103 are obviated.

With regard to the rejection under 35 USC 103 over Hartingan in view of Kooter Lenders, Applicant notes that the newly submitted claim is presented in such a way to define patentable subject matter over the Examiner's combination. In particular, Applicant notes that in the Office Action the Examiner pointed out "that the two seatbelt straps, the male buckle and the shoulder belt harness and any components thereof are not a part of a claimed combination, but rather are items of intended use and are not given patentable weight." In the newly submitted Claim 15, Applicant affirmatively claims structure of the invention, such that the seatbelt and harness assemblies, while not elements of the invention, are necessarily part of the environment in which the invention is used. That is, the invention is presented in such a way in Claim 15 that it may only be used in connection with such assemblies. Applicant also has presented elements of the invention using closed language, *i.e.* "including" rather than the word "comprising."

Thus, Claim 15 refers to a safety restraint for a vehicle comprising:

- a rectangular flexible sheet,
- a lower, edge portion of said flexible sheet including two spaced attachment rings,
- each of said attachment rings configured to be sufficiently small to engage respective straps behind female seatbelt buckles without sliding up the straps and over the buckles;
- said flexible sheet including a rigidifying strip along a parallel edge thereof, opposite said two attachment rings;
- a buckling assembly attached to said rigidifying strip and including one attachment ring configured to engage with a male seatbelt buckle of a center shoulder harness; and

adjustment hardware for adjusting the position of the attachment ring included with said buckling assembly relative to said rigidifying strip.

It should be noted that the rigidifying strip and buckling assembly of the claimed invention allows one handed operation of the safety restraint. Thus, as pointed out in the Specification, a parent sitting in the front seat of the car may fasten or unfasten the safety restraint through the expedient of a single attachment ring associated with the buckling assembly.

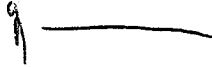
Kooter Lenders is not deemed particularly relevant to the claimed invention as it does not teach or suggest any of the structure of the claimed invention.

With regard to Hartigan, Applicant notes that Hartigan relies on clips that clip underneath a seat and straps that strap into seatbelt buckles. A person skilled in the art would not understand from Hartigan, or from the combination of Hartigan and Kooter Lenders for that matter, that a flexible sheet could be provided that includes two spaced attachment rings that are configured to be sufficiently small to engage respective straps behind female seatbelt buckles without sliding up the straps and over the buckles. There is no teaching or suggestion of this mechanism in any of the art of record. Further, a person having regard to Hartigan and Kooter Lenders would not understand that a rigidifying strip could be provided to which a buckling assembly is attached that provides a single attachment ring which engage with a male seatbelt buckle of a center shoulder harness.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant is of the opinion that Claim 15 has defined patentable subject matter over the art of record.

Should the Examiner deem it helpful, he is encouraged to contact Applicant's attorney, Michael A. Glenn, at (650) 474-8400.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line.

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